

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1-2, 4-14 and 16-18 are currently pending in the present application. By the present amendment, claims 1 and 13 have been amended. No new matter has been added by the current amendment, as support thereof can be found in the present specification at, *inter alia*, page 7, lines 11-14. Applicants point out that the amendments made herein are made without prejudice to the future prosecution of such cancelled, amended or modified subject matter in a related divisional, continuation or continuation-in-part application.

In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are now in condition for allowance.

II. OBJECTION TO CLAIM 13

Claim 13 stands objected to because “material” should be changed to “medium.” Applicants have herein made this amendment, and thus it is respectfully submitted that this claim objection has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

III. REJECTION OF CLAIM 13 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,110,316 to Kobayashi et al. (“Kobayashi”) for the reasons set forth on page 3 of the Office Action.

In response, Applicants submit that claim 13, as amended, is directed to a device for printing objects. The presently claimed device comprises two or more processing stations configured to successively provide two or more layers of printing medium on a supply carrier, and a printing device configured to bring the layers of printing medium on the carrier in contact with the object to be printed, thereby transferring said layers onto the object, the device further comprising several carriers, configured to be successively brought into the two or more processing stations and the printing device.

In contrast to the presently claimed invention, Kobayashi discloses a device for producing a decorative laminate by adhering a transfer printing sheet to the three-dimensional irregular surface of a base. The device may have multiple processing stations, as cited in the Office Action. However, the disclosed device does not have “several carriers configured to be successively brought into two or more processing stations and a printing device,” as is presently claimed.

Therefore, Kobayashi does not disclose the presently claimed invention, and the present claims are not anticipated by Kobayashi. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 13 over Kobayashi under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1 and 7-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over International Patent Application Publication No. WO 00/61376 to LaFaille et al. (“LaFaille”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,037,008 to Tugwell (“Tugwell”) for the reasons set forth on pages 4-5 of the Office Action; Claims 2, 4 and 18 stand

rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over LaFaille in view of Tugwell, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,391,853 to Pointon (“Pointon”) and U.S. Patent No. 4,233,358 to Jones et al. (“Jones”) for the reasons set forth on page 6 of the Office Action; Claims 5 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over LaFaille in view of Tugwell, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,254,712 to Enlow et al. (“Enlow”) for the reasons set forth on pages 6-7 of the Office Action; and Claim 16 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Kobayashi in view of LaFaille for the reasons set forth on page 7 of the Office Action. It is respectfully submitted that these rejections should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

In rejecting a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Examiner bears the initial burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *In re Rijckaert*, 9 F.3d 1531, 1532, 28 U.S.P.Q.2d 1955, 1956 (Fed. Cir. 1993). To establish *prima facie* obviousness, the prior art references, when combined, must teach or suggest all the claim limitations, there must be some reason to combine or modify the reference teachings, with a reasonable expectation of success. MPEP § 2143.

Independent method claim 1 of the present application has been amended herein to recite that “the method is carried out with a device comprising several carriers, which successively are brought into different processing stations and a printing device.” Similarly, independent device claim 13 has been amended herein to recite that the device comprises “several carriers, configured to be successively brought into the two or more processing stations and the printing device.” No new matter has been added by these amendments, as support thereof can be found in the present specification at, *inter alia*,

page 7, lines 11-14. As described in the present specification, “[b]y using several carriers, the advantage is created that different treatments simultaneously can be carried out on the respective carriers and that the actual printing treatments can be performed shortly one after the other, without each time having to wait until one carrier has been run through a full cycle.” Specification, page 7, lines 15-20.

Applicants respectfully submit that the presently pending claims are not rendered obvious by any combination of the cited references. That is, in contrast to any combination of the cited references, the presently claimed invention includes a device having several carriers, which successively are brought into different processing stations and a printing device. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that each and every element of the pending claims is not disclosed nor suggested by the cited references. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been overcome and should therefore be withdrawn.

V. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that such action be taken. If for any reason the Examiner believes that prosecution of this application would be advanced by contact with the Applicants' attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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